



## MOUNTAIN ASH *Sorbus spp.*



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There are two native species of mountain ash found in Maine: the American mountain ash *Sorbus Americana* Marsh, also called roundwood, and the showy or Northern mountain ash *Sorbus decora* (Sarg.) Schneid.

American mountain ash occurs statewide; it is not a true ash, but is closely related to the apple. It rarely reaches over 20 feet in height. It is particularly common in mountainous regions and along the coast. The leaves are alternate, compound 13–17 inches long, tapered, and have 11–17 finely toothed leaflets. The leaflets are 2–4 inches long,  $\frac{3}{8}$ –1 inch wide, and without hairs.

The small creamy-white **flowers** are borne in cymes. The berry-like **fruit** is bright red, and about  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch in diameter. These remain on the tree late into the winter; they make good bird





food. In the past, they were sometimes used as an astringent in medicine. The bud scales are hairless and sticky. The pale brown **wood** has little value because it is soft and weak.

Showy mountain ash is most commonly found in northern and western parts of the state. It is usually better balanced in outline than the American mountain ash and has a well-rounded crown. The **leaves** are alternate, compound, and differ from the preceding species in having leaflets which are only 1½–3 inches long, and 5⁄8–15⁄8 inches wide. The **fruit** is larger, up to ½ inch in diameter, and matures later in the season. The outer **bud scales** are sticky; the inner scales are hairy.



*This photo is of American mountain ash fruit. Showy mountain ash fruit is larger.*

